

## QUALITY ASSURANCE & ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee (QAEC)  
held on  
Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014

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### Present:

Professor Debra Humphris, Vice Provost (Education) – Chair  
Dr Simon Archer, College Tutor  
Professor Sue Gibson, Director of the Graduate School  
Professor Nigel Gooderham, Senior College Consul  
Dr Paul Lickiss, Department of Chemistry  
Dr David McPhail, Deputy Director of the Graduate School  
Mr Dean Pateman, Academic Registrar  
Professor Sue Smith, Deputy Director of Education, Faculty of Medicine  
Professor Alan Spivey, Director of Education Faculty, of Natural Sciences  
Mr Andreas Thomik, GSU President  
Ms Sophie White, Senior Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement)

### In attendance:

Dr Niki Gouraris, Director of Postgraduate Studies, Department of Life Sciences, (for item 4.1)  
Professor Richard Jardine, College Consul, Faculty of Engineering and Business School (for item 4.1)  
Ms Helen Pennington, Student Representative, Department of Life Sciences, (for item 4.1)  
Professor Murray Selkirk, Head of Department, Department of Life Sciences, (for item 4.1)  
Ms Rachel Vaux, Student Representative, Department of Life Sciences, (for item 4.1)  
Mr Chris Harris, Quality Assurance & Enhancement Manager, Faculty of Medicine  
Mr Calum MacLeod, Management Trainee  
Mrs Clare Scheibner, Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance & Enhancement), (Secretary)

### Apologies:

Professor Peter Cheung, Vice Dean (Education) Faculty of Engineering  
Ms Nat Kempston, ICU Deputy President (Education)  
Professor Denis Wright, Director of Student Support

- |           |  | <b>Paper</b>        |
|-----------|--|---------------------|
| <b>1.</b> | <b>Welcome and Apologies</b><br>Professor Humphris welcomed members to the meeting and apologies, as listed above, were noted.   |                     |
| <b>2.</b> | <b>Minutes</b><br>The minutes of the Quality Assurance & Enhancement Committee (QAEC) held on 26 <sup>th</sup> November 2013 were approved and the Committee Actions were noted. | <b>QAEC.2013.37</b> |
| <b>3.</b> | <b>Matters arising from the Minutes</b><br>There were no matters arising not appearing elsewhere on the agenda for discussion.   |                     |

**4. Periodic Reviews 2012-13****4.1 Periodic Review of the Master's Programmes in the Department of Life Sciences QAEC.2013.38**

The Committee considered the reports of the assessors for the periodic review of the Master's programmes in the Department of Life Sciences.

**4.1.1** The following representatives of the review panel and Department were present, Professor Richard Jardine representing the internal Chair of the panel, Professor Murray Selkirk, Head of Department, Dr Niki Gounaris, Director of Postgraduate Studies, Ms Rachel Vaux and Ms Helen Pennington student representatives from the Department.

**4.1.2** The Committee was pleased that the review panel had noted that eight of the nine programmes assessed were rated as "good" by the College's internal review process. The panel had also noted that morale was high amongst the students with most being happy with their studies.

**4.1.3** The Committee noted that the panel had highlighted instances of good practice which included; web-based access on the Bioinformatics and Theoretical Systems Biology projects; the foundation labs for Applied Biosciences and Biotechnology/Molecular Plant Biology and Biotechnology; as well as the welcome tutorials in Molecular and Cellular Basis of Infection.

**4.1.4** The student representatives informed the Committee that the Graduate School MasterClass courses were of variable usefulness to students. Feedback from students based at the Natural History Museum had indicated that some of the courses had been too specialised and not appropriate for them.

**4.1.5** The panel had further highlighted the rigorous selection of excellent students to all programmes. However it was noted that the MSc in Taxonomy and Biodiversity collaborative programme with the Natural History Museum had a lower entry requirement than the other programmes.

**4.1.6** The Committee asked the Department to clarify the steps it had taken to address the entry requirements for the MSc in Taxonomy and Biodiversity. The Department confirmed that Dr Gounaris would now be a member of the admission selection panel for the programme. The Department also confirmed that the entry requirement from 2014-5 would be increased from a 2:2 to a 2:1. A 2:2 would only be considered as a special case if the applicant had 3 years relevant work experience.

**4.1.7** The Committee heard that steps had been taken to improve interactions with students on the collaborative programmes with the Natural History Museum. These actions included social events which had received a positive student response, regular visits to the students by the Postgraduate Tutor and further integration within Imperial of the Natural History Museum Programme Administrator.

**4.1.8** The Committee congratulated the Department on an overall positive review and asked the Department to update the Committee on progress made in respect of

the admissions to the MSc in Taxonomy and Biodiversity and collaborative student inclusion within the Imperial Community by January 2015.

**Action: Department of Life Sciences**

The Committee agreed to recommend to Senate that the next scheduled Periodic Review would take place in 5-6 years' time.

## 5. Strategic Approval for Partnership

### 5.1 New collaborative MRes with King's College London and the Department of Chemistry QAEC.2013.39\*

The Committee noted that following the establishment a new [CDT in Medical Imaging](#), and that initial strategic approval for the establishment of a new collaborative MRes programme between Imperial College London and King's College London would be requested shortly. It was further noted that the proposal would be circulated to the Committee via email in due course.

#### Post meeting note

The Department of Chemistry confirmed that the CDT MRes programme would be a King's College only award with a small amount of collaborative material delivered by Imperial.

### 5.2 New EngD in Composites Manufacture (Department of Aeronautics)

The Committee noted that Imperial's Department of Aeronautics had been invited to join the Industrial Doctorate Centre in Composites Manufacture. The IDC would be collaboration between the Universities of Bristol and Nottingham (with Bristol as the lead institution). It would be proposed that the EngD would be an Imperial award with Bristol delivering the taught component. Strategic approval for the partnership and proposed new EngD in Composites Manufacture would be requested shortly. It was further noted that the proposal would be circulated to the Committee via email in due course.

#### Post Meeting Note

Subject to Senate approval, due to a change in the approval for collaborative provision procedures, the Provost Board would now be asked to approve the collaboration with Bristol if the department wished to proceed.

## 6. QAA – UK Quality Code for Higher Education Gap Analysis

The Committee considered the following gap analysis documents which related to the publication of the new QAA Quality Code.

### 6.1 Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards QAEC.2013.40

The Committee noted that report mapped the indicators and expectations of Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards against current College policies and procedures.

### 6.2 Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education. QAEC.2013.41

The Committee noted that the report mapped the indicators and expectations of Chapter B2, recruitment, selection and admission to higher education, against current College policies and procedures.

**6.3 Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval**

The Committee noted that the report mapped the indicators and expectations of Chapter B1, programme design, development and approval, against current College policies and procedures.

**6.4 Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning**

The Committee noted that the report mapped the indicators and expectations of Chapter B6, assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning, against current College policies and procedures.

QAEC.2013.43

**6.5 Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review**

The report mapped the indicators and expectations of Chapter B8, programme monitoring and review, against current College policies and procedures.

QAEC.2013.44

**6.6** Professor Humphris informed the Committee that particular areas of concern highlighted within the gap analysis documents included:

- Ensuring consistency across the College with regards to the allocation of ECTS per study hours.
- Consistency of content within programme specifications and ensuring these are kept up to date.
- Ensuring a definitive record of each programmed was maintained.

**6.7** The Committee also heard that the gap analysis were the first step in developing a larger body of work that Mr Dean Pateman would be taking forward to address the ambitions in the Education and Student Strategy and with the implementation of the student system replacement. Mr Pateman would develop a comprehensive timeline outlining the work required which would be initially considered by the Vice-Provost Advisory Group for Education in March 2014.

**Action: Dean Pateman**

**7. Conduct of Boards of Examiners Meeting and Associated Guidelines and Regulations**

QAEC.2013.45

The Committee heard that in June 2013, Senate approved a new procedure for *the Conduct of Undergraduate Examination Boards* with effect from 2013-4. Since the approval of this document, the QAA had published Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning of the UK Quality Code. It was therefore timely for the Committee to update this procedure in the light of the new chapter and at the same time make the necessary amendments to associated guidelines and regulations.

**7.1** Furthermore, in April 2013 the Master's Quality Committees (MQCs) had been asked to consider whether anonymity should be introduced for Master's Level programmes at the final Examination Board. The two MQCs considered the matter during the autumn term 2013 and agreed that:

- 1) the default position should be that the final Boards should be anonymous
- 2) programmes should be able to request a dispensation from the anonymity requirement
- 3) consideration of mitigating circumstances should be kept separate from the final Board of Examiners' meeting.

In light of this the Committee approved a new procedure for *the Conduct of Master's Level (MSc, MRes, MBA, MEd, MPH, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate) Boards of Examiners' Meetings* with effect from 2014-5.

- 7.2** The Committee also considered a procedure for requesting dispensation from the anonymity requirement. The Committee agreed that the Chairs of the Master's Quality Committees should consider requests for dispensation from anonymity for approval on behalf of their Committees. The Committee also agreed that dispensation should only be granted for up to a maximum of two years. It was further agreed that Professor Sue Gibson and Dr David McPhail should consider what would be acceptable as appropriate criteria for non-anonymity at Final Examination Boards.

**Post Meeting Note**

Professor Sue Gibson and Dr David McPhail discussed criteria for allowing boards not to be anonymous and agreed that there may be a range of reasons (including students numbers) and they would review the criteria for approval if necessary after the first round of requests.

- 7.3** The Committee also approved the proposed amendments to the following procedures and regulations:

The Conduct of Undergraduate Boards of Examiners' Meetings  
 Conduct of Viva Voce Examinations  
 Penalties for Late Submission  
 Mitigating Circumstances Procedures  
 Advanced Programme Marking Scheme Policy [and associated regulations]

- 7.4** For further clarity an amendment to the Examination Regulations regarding oral (viva voce) examinations was also agreed.

The Committee agreed to recommend for Senate approval the amendments to:

1. The Conduct of Master's Level (MSc, MRes, MBA, MEd, MPH, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate) Boards of Examiners' Meetings procedure with effect from 2014-5
2. The procedure for Master's level programmes for requesting dispensation from anonymity with effect from 2014-5.
3. The amendments to appendices 3 – 7 (and associated regulations) with immediate effect
4. The amendments to the College regulations for oral examinations with immediate effect

**8. B10 - Establishing Collaborative Programmes and Awards**

**QAEC.2013.46**

The Committee considered proposed changes to current procedures for establishing collaborative programmes and awards.

- 8.1** The Committee heard that in December 2012 the Quality Assurance Agency published Chapter B10 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education: *Managing higher education provision with others*. This Chapter superseded the Code of

practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (the Code of practice), Section 2: *Collaborative Provision and flexible and distributed learning* (amplified version 2010) and Section 9: *Work-based and placement learning* (2007).

**8.2** In response to the new chapter, a working party, chaired by Professor Denis Wright, reviewed the current practices to ensure compliance with the updated code. On the 26th November 2013 the Committee received a report from the working party and agreed that further consideration was required by Faculties and Departments.

**8.3** The Committee were re-presented with the policies regarding establishing and reviewing collaborative provision, together with a paper explaining the rationale for the existing policy and the purpose and desirability of collaborative programmes and awards. The Committee were also asked how these should be consulted on further.

**8.4** The Committee agreed that, with the introduction of the term “normally” in all cases, the following principles should continue to apply and further consultation by Faculties and Departments would no longer be required:

1. The College will not normally participate in any Erasmus Mundus (joint, dual or multiple) degree award programmes.
2. College will not normally participate in joint research degree (PhD or EngD) awards with UK institutions
3. To be eligible to obtain a Master’s degree awarded by Imperial College students must, normally, be in full-time attendance at Imperial for a minimum of 16 weeks (and pro-rata part-time)
4. To be eligible to obtain a research degree (PhD or EngD) awarded by Imperial College, normally, at least one year of a 3/4 year full-time programme would need to be spent at Imperial College (or pro-rata for part-time/longer programmes).
5. The College will not normally participate in any multiple awards
6. The College will not normally participate in any joint Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma, MPhil or MD(Res) awards.

**8.5** The Committee considered and approved amendments to the following policies and procedures and agreed to recommend them for Senate approval with immediate effect.

1. *Guidelines for Establishing and Reviewing Collaborative Provision*
2. *Procedure for Establishing Undergraduate and Master’s Level Collaborative Programmes and Awards*
3. *Procedure for Establishing Research Degree (PhD and EngD) Collaborative Programmes and Awards*
4. *Procedure for Establishing Collaborative Modules*

**8.6** The Committee also approved Minor changes to enhance and streamline the following supporting documents:

1. *Key Criteria for consideration when establishing collaborative arrangements*

2. *Due Diligence Check*
3. *Site Visits*
4. *Academic and Governance Issues*
5. *Criteria for consideration when establishing collaborative Master's level programmes with Industrial Partners*

The Committee approved the proposed changes and agreed to recommend them for Senate approval.

**9. Level 7 Pass Mark of Degrees in Faculty of Engineering** **QAEC.2013.47**

The Committee considered the response from the Faculty of Engineering regarding the harmonisation of the level 7 pass marks across MEng and Master's programmes.

- 9.1** Further discussion would continue between Professor Humphris, Mr Pateman and Professor Cheung regarding the response.

**Action: Debra Humphris, Peter Cheung and Dean Pateman**

**10. Amendment to College Procedures** **QAEC.2013.48**

The Committee considered a paper outlining suggested amendments to the current procedure: *Student Withdrawals and Appeals - Procedure for dealing with cases of unsatisfactory academic progress*.

The Committee approved the proposed changes and agreed to recommend them for Senate approval effective immediately.

**11. Student Progression Data: Undergraduate Failure Rates 2012-3** **QAEC.2013.49**

The Committee considered a report of Undergraduate failure rates for 2012-3. The Committee noted that the report would be considered in detail by the Faculty Studies Committees. Future reports would be noted by QAEC following consideration by the Faculty Studies Committees.

**12. Educational Development Unit Courses** **QAEC.2013.50**

The Committee noted a report outlining courses provided by the Educational Development Unit in response to the QAA Chapter B5: Student Engagement, Indicator 4 and the College Roles and Responsibilities document for External Examiners. [The paper addressed both actions outlined in Ref. QAAC, 17.01.2012, item 5.6.2 & QAAC, 20.11.2012, item 7.1.17].

**13. QAA**

**13.1 Response to the consultation on draft guidance for UK higher education providers on education for sustainable development** **QAEC.2013.51**

The Committee noted the College's response to the QAA's consultation on the draft new guidance for UK higher education providers regarding education for sustainable development. Further information could be found at the following link: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Newsroom/Consultations/Pages/Consultation-ESD.aspx>

**13.2 Consultation for Strengthening the quality assurance of UK transnational education**

The Committee noted that following consideration by the higher education

sector representative bodies on what is needed to strengthen the quality assurance of UK transnational education (TNE), the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and the UK Higher Education International Unit (the IU) were issuing a consultation on the subject. Further information could be found at the following link:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Newsroom/Consultations/Pages/TNE.aspx>

- 13.2.1** It was also noted that the College response to the consultation would be considered by QAEC on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

**14. HEFCE - UK performance indicators valued by the higher education sector**

The Committee noted that a fundamental review of the UK Performance Indicators for higher education (UKPIs) had been published.

The report, 'How should we measure Higher Education? A fundamental review of the Performance Indicators', was commissioned by the UK Performance Indicators Steering Group (UKPISG). It showed that UKPIs are valued as a way to measure the nature and performance of higher education in the UK, and concluded that the current approach to UKPIs is appropriate and should be retained. Further information could be found at the following link:

<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2013/news85258.html>

**15. Any Other Business**

No other business was discussed.

**16. Dates of next meetings 2013-4**

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2014, 10am - 1pm, Ballroom, 58 Prince's Gate

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014, 10am - 1pm, Ballroom, 58 Prince's Gate

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2014, 10am -1pm, Ballroom, 58 Prince's Gate

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014, 10am -1pm, Ballroom, 58 Prince's Gate

**17. Reserved Areas of Business**

There were no reserved areas of business.

Papers marked with \* were unavailable at the time of the meeting therefore not received by the Committee.